

Claims

1. A messaging system comprising a messaging engine for operating under user instructions to generate and transmit messages addressed to recipient contacts; characterised in that the system comprises a server comprising:-
 - a client interface (4) comprising means for allowing access by a plurality of users of registered clients;
 - a client manager (2) comprising means for maintaining a database of registered clients;
 - a content manager (25) comprising means for receiving content items uploaded from users and for storing said content in a content database (26, 27, 29);
 - means in the content manager (25) for selecting content items for a message;
 - means in the messaging engine (21) for generating and sending a message with links to selected content items in the content database;
 - a response management function (22) comprising means for monitoring a response from a recipient contact using said links;
 - a build function (20) comprising means for building content for the responding recipient contact according to the links used by said contact to respond; and

means in the response management function (23) for sending the built content to the responding recipient contact.

5 2. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the content manger (25) comprises means for storing profile attributes for content items, and for selecting content items according to said attributes.

10 3. A messaging system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the profile attributes are included in meta data.

15 4. A messaging system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the server further comprises a contacts manager (10) comprising means for managing a contacts database (11) of contacts uploaded by users, in which contacts are associated with the users and with profile attributes.

20 5. A messaging system as claimed in claim 2, wherein the content manager (25) comprises means for selecting content items by matching profile attributes of a contact with profile attributes of the content items.

6. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the content items comprise content collateral parts and message text uploaded by users.

25 7. A messaging system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the content manager (25) comprises means for managing a database of templates, in which each template is a group of identifiers of collateral parts and message text for re-use by a user.

8. A messaging system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the content manager (25) comprises means for managing a database of wrappers, in which each wrapper comprises links to selected content items.

5 9. A messaging system as claimed in claim 6, wherein the content manager (25) comprises means for grouping content items at the levels of a user organisation (27), a user group within an organisation (29), and individual users (26).

10 10. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the messaging engine comprises means for generating each link in a manner whereby it is unique to the message, and the response management function (22) comprises means for monitoring said links to identify the responding recipient contacts.

15 11. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the server comprises a response reporting function comprising means for generating management reports using data captured by the response management function.

20 12. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the messaging engine (21) comprises means for allowing a user to directly enter content to a message without previously uploading it to the content manager.

25 13. A messaging system as claimed in claim 1, wherein the messaging engine comprises means for:

receiving a message generated by a user locally using an external messaging application;

5 parsing said message and generating a message having a wrapper with links to content of the content database according to the parsing.

10 14. A messaging system as claimed in claim 13, wherein the messaging engine (21) comprises means for parsing a header for content in the received message, and for using said header to identify relevant content in the content database.

15 15. A method of, under user instructions, generating a message and sending it to a recipient contact, the method being carried out by a server and comprising the steps of:-

a user uploading content collateral and message text to the server, and the server storing said collateral and text with profile attributes;

20 the user uploading contact data, and the server storing the contact data with profile attributes;

25 generating a message by matching profile attributes of the contact with those of the content to select content, and including in the message uploaded message text and links to said selected content;

transmitting the message to the contact;

subsequently receiving a response from the contact using a link,
capturing data including identifiers of the contact and of the content;
and

5 generating a response report based on said captured data.

16. A method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the link is unique to the
combination of contact and content, and the link is used to capture said
data, and the step of receiving the response comprises the further step
10 of determining an actual address for the content based on the link
address.

17. A computer program product comprising software code for performing
a method as claimed in claims 15 or 16 when executing on a digital
15 computer.